**Context**: I support the Big Picture Network (70 schools nationally with a pedagogy of having students learn through their passions primarily by setting up students in internships 2 days per week. Learning through Internships / Interests is a core experience through all 4 years and largely drives curriculum). Specifically, I look for ways to help principals around leadership issues. I have launched this idea of holding Leadership-centered Critical Friends Groups in regions. I have conducted 3 Mid Atlantic (about 7 schools from DC to NYC) CFGs and am faced with introducing this concept in Newark later this month at a Principals Retreat.

We have decided to break up into 4 groups. One for each of three schools in Newark and their leadership with their issues. A fourth group is for the overall principal of the Newark Innovation Academy who is responsible for 6 schools….3 of which are Big Picture.

The leader / issue I have to facilitate is below (CASE: Jennifer Ryan). Names are changed.

My **questions**:

1. What can I do to best prepare for this in terms of (a) clarifying this issue with the school leader and (b) what prep (texts, tools?) can I do in the meantime?
2. Ideas for how to use this opportunity to illustrate the power of Regional CFGs during the end of the day?

Materials included before

**Case: JENNIFER RYAN** – This is the specific issue that one school leader wants me to facilitate. All her own words.

**Other Issues:** This table shows what the other group issues are.

**Case**: JENNIFER RYAN – BIG PICTURE HIGH

Jennifer’s dilemma: Increasing productivity in an advisor.  How to coach a defensive staff member to lead a successful advisory without dealing with intense anger and defensiveness.

Jennifer: The positive:

My specific concern is related to an advisor who has an extremely high energy level at times and starts each year full of ideas.  His advisory started off strong and the students were enthusiastic.  The advisor is very capable and knowledgeable of his content area.  He has great showmanship and can articulate the BP learning philosophy quite well to any audience.

Jennifer: The negative:

The advisor rarely follows through on what he articulates to others.  In addition, he rarely follows through on promises in general that he makes to staff and students.  Students have begun to notice and comment about broken promises. At times it has become a point of contention with students.  Staff members are concerned as well.  Consequently, the advisory has begun to fall apart.  What was once a group of 17 students motivated to learn and act as leaders has significantly dwindled.  Less than five remain on target.  The attendance, culture, and LTI stats are now the worst in the building.  The advisor is rarely seen teaching and spends more time isolated (on laptop) from students than working with them.  He rarely visits LTI sites and has hardly established any internship set-up or project meetings to date.  The students are frustrated and many are mentally dropping out.  He will quickly point out that he is not here to baby students and will discuss tasks he gave them to do.  However, little coaching and teaching is taking place. Whenever, any issue is brought to his attention, it is not uncommon for shouting and/or crying to take place.  Advisor, comes to 1:1 meetings, staff meetings, and general PD and BP meetings unprepared, unfocused, and disengaged in what is being addressed.  Everyone has experienced this concern at some point.

Steps taken to resolve the issue:

* I have met with the advisor to address concerns during 1:1 meetings.
* Addressed concerns in a general format in meetings and during Sunday Specials.
* I confronted the staff member directly regarding a concern in a staff meeting (prior to becoming coordinator). This proved disastrous.
* I have expressed some concerns via email to the advisor and cc'd Mr. Jones (principal) and Joe (Big Picture rep)
* I have expressed specific concerns during my 1:1's with his supervisor, my coach, and the school's (NIA's) principal.
* I've acknowledged the staff member's achievement when he performs well.  He thrives off of such attention.

**Other Issues**

| **School / Coordinator** | **Issue** | **Facilitator** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| School #1 | Learning environment placing students at the center | Joe B. |
| School #2 | Individual staff member difficulty | Michael |
| School #3 | Build BP culture | Dan |
| Principal of Innovation Academy responsible for 6 schools (multiple models) | How can I more effectively provide support to 6 school leaders whose authority has been capped by the district so their leadership and function is maximized while I equip the 2 persons who have been have the authority to be effective without overwhelming them and burning them out? | Dana |